



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

NOVEMBER 26, 2002
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPERATION COCAINE COWBOYS
CARTHAGE MAN SENTENCED FOR
DRUG TRAFFICKING

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Carthage man was sentenced today for conspiring with others to distribute cocaine. Today's sentenced was part of Operation Cocaine Cowboys, which charged 36 federal defendants with illegal drug trafficking and firearms sales in Jasper County and elsewhere in southwest Missouri.

Douglas Diaz, 24, of Carthage, was sentenced by U.S. Magistrate Judge James C. England this morning to two years and six months in prison without parole.

On June 27, 2002, **Diaz** pleaded guilty to a two-count superseding federal information charging him with conspiracy to distribute cocaine in Jasper County and elsewhere from December 1, 2001 to January 7, 2002. Graves explained that the information also included a forfeiture count, which requires **Diaz** to forfeit to the United States all property derived from the criminal violation, including \$2,200.

Operation Cocaine Cowboys focused on an organization of individuals who were allegedly responsible for the delivery and distribution of multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana and other drugs from sources in California, Texas and Guatemala. As charged in a series of federal indictments and federal criminal complaints, Graves explained, 36 federal defendants allegedly distributed illegal narcotics, primarily in Jasper County, but also in at least four other southwest Missouri counties (Christian, Greene, Lawrence and Webster) and elsewhere. Graves said that undercover officers made numerous purchases of illegal drugs and weapons as part of the investigation. In addition to the federal defendants, about 26 other individuals, including adults and juveniles, face a variety of state charges in related cases, primarily in Jasper County.

Of those 36 federal defendants, Graves said, 30 have been convicted and two remain fugitives. Charges against two defendants were dismissed in favor of state prosecution.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall D. Eggert. Operation Cocaine Cowboys was investigated by officers from the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Combined Ozarks Multijurisdictional Enforcement Team (COMET), in cooperation with numerous other law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Alcohol, tobacco and Firearms, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Jasper County Drug Task Force, Mid-States Organized Crime Information Center (MOCIC), and the Carthage Police Department. Assistance to Operation Cocaine Cowboys was provided by the Greene, Jasper and Stone county sheriff's departments, the Joplin, Springfield, Oronogo and Webb City police departments, and the U.S. Marshals Service.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow